



MINUTES

**BRYAN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2010
AT 8:30 A.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BRYAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING
300 SOUTH TEXAS AVENUE, BRYAN, TEXAS**

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Beckendorf called the workshop meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

Commission members present: Mr. Michael Beckendorf, Mr. Scott Hickle, Mr. G.H. Jones, Mr. Don Maxwell, Mr. Michael Parks, Mrs. Helen Chavarria and Mr. Chuck Konderla

Commission members absent: Mr. John Bond and Mr. Prentiss Madison.

Staff members present: Mr. Martin Zimmermann, Planning Administrator; Ms. Julie Fulgham, Senior Planner; Ms. Michelle Audenaert, Economic Development Planner; Mr. Randy Haynes, Project Planner; Mr. Paul Kaspar, City Engineer; Mr. Barney Williams, Assistant City Engineer; and Ms. Meredith Wilganowski, Assistant City Attorney.

2. PRESENTATION FROM A GROUP OF LOCAL ARCHITECTS FROM THE BRAZOS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (AIA) CONCERNING BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Ms. Eva Read-Warden and Mr. Leon Williamson gave a presentation outlining the need for, benefits and risks of design standards being implemented in Bryan. Ms. Read-Warden stated that a sub-committee of the Brazos Chapter AIA had been studying the issue for a number of months as the result of having unintended consequences with regard to building design and construction regulations.

3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF CONCERNING BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Commissioners discussed what the next step should be with regard to drafting changes to the city code relating to design and construction standards.

Commissioners appeared to agree that protecting Bryan's corridors should be a priority and that the development of new building design standards could perhaps start by amending existing corridor overlay districts.

Commissioners agreed to further discuss this subject at the next workshop meeting on April 15, 2010.

4. STAFF PRESENTATION OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND BUILDING PERMITTING TRENDS.

Mr. Zimmermann presented statistics comparing the number of building permits and their dollar values over the past two years. The numbers documented a steep decline in 2009 but suggested a recovery for the first three months of 2010. Mr. Zimmermann also presented a slide show with examples of current residential and nonresidential development activity.

Mr. Williams briefed the Commission on the scope and progress of ongoing capital improvement projects.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF CONCERNING THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON BUILDING SETBACKS, BUILDING ENCROACHMENTS AND VARIANCES.

Mr. Zimmermann presented the commission with background and supporting information regarding building setbacks and the enforcement of the code as well as statistics relating to the number of building setback variances that have been approved since 2001. Mr. Zimmermann also presented a list of questions compounded by the setback subcommittee.

Commissioner Hickle stated that he was concerned that 87% of all variance requests had been approved during the past ten years. Mr. Hickle further stated that a granted variance request should be rare.

Commissioner Maxwell reminded the Commission that the variance issue had been contentious for years and that most votes on those cases were split votes. Mr. Maxwell further stated that many of the requests were very hard to deny even though the facts may not have allowed approval.

Commissioner Parks stated that since 87% of requests were approved, that may be an indicator that the ordinance did not reflect the will of the citizens.

Mr. Zimmermann stated that not all variance cases were recommended for denial by staff, but that each case is being evaluated based on the criteria for variance approvals in the ordinance.

Commissioners agreed that the issue merited further discussion and possibly direction from the City Council. Staff was directed to place the item for discussion on a future workshop meeting agenda and look into the possibility of a joint meeting with the Council to discuss the issue before the Fall.

6. ADJOURN.

Without objection, Chairperson Beckendorf adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

These minutes were reviewed and approved by the City of Bryan Planning & Zoning Commission on the **15th** day of **April, 2010**.

Michael Beckendorf, Chairperson
Planning and Zoning Commission
City of Bryan, Texas

Martin Zimmermann, Planning Administrator
and Secretary to the Planning and Zoning
Commission